

# real brides, real advice



## sarasota, florida

Sarah Evans & Eric Thelen

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**F**rom the start, Sarah, a publicist, and Eric, a senior sales executive, had a lot in common. They grew up in Virginia, attended East Carolina University and live in New York City. And their parents all moved to Venice, Florida, where they became friends *and* matchmakers. Three years after the couple's first date, Eric proposed. The Lido Beach Resort, only 20 minutes from their parents' homes, could easily accommodate their 150 guests and provided multiple locations for all of the festivities. On arrival, guests were welcomed with beach towels that read, "Meet Us on the Beach 11-09-07." A laid-back poolside barbecue kicked off the celebration. After the beachfront sunset ceremony the next day, guests retired to a tented reception on the sand, which featured Sicilian pizzas, chicken and beef fajitas, cocktails and dancing. The after-party was held in the resort's ballroom-turned-nightclub, coined "Club Thelen" for the night, after the couple's last name. Key elements included Club Thelen signs, VIP invites and a hot-pink runway in the middle of the dance floor. The next evening, guests relived the party as they watched a video of the events while drinking turquoise "Thelentinis," the signature cocktail.

### SARAH'S TIPS

**MARRY ON FRIDAY** All of our guests traveled from out of town. Getting married on Friday night allowed us to spend ample quality time with them for the rest of the weekend.

**PERSONALIZE IT** From programs to welcome letters to a theme with signature cocktails, the personalized details added an extra-special meaning to our day.

**ENJOY THE PLANNING** The 14 months we spent planning our wedding were so much fun, and our family enjoyed the process too.

